

October 17, 2013

To: House Judiciary Committee

From: C/O Ronald Solmes

On behalf of my wife Karen and I, Thank you for the opportunity to address the Judiciary Committee today regarding HB 4133.

#1 In 2006, I worked at Michigan Training Unit in Ionia, where I issued a misconduct report to an inmate for threatening behavior. Two weeks later, my wife was taking her usual four mile walk when a car slowed down. The window of the car was lowered, and the name of the inmate was shouted out of the window of the car. The car then proceeded to the next traffic intersection, all of the occupants of the vehicle got out of the car (weapons in plain view) waiting for Karen to walk up to the intersection. Karen, fearing for her life, decided the best evasive action was to run through the woods in the hope that she could make it home before these aggressors could reach her. Running as fast as she could, she made it home, locking herself in the house. She thought "How could this happen to me?" She peeked out the blinds of the window and that same vehicle was cruising up and down the street trying to figure out which house she was in.

#2 In 2003, State Corrections Officer Melissa Barber was making her rounds in Unit 3 at Ionia Max when she reached this one cell whose occupant had a disdain for all female officers. He immediately held up several pictures (all the pictures were taken inside of her home). The first picture was of her bedroom, the second was of her children's room, the third was taken out the rear window of the house showing her children playing in the back yard. He told her "I can get you any time I want." For months after that incident, she would come home to furniture moved around and much more.

#3 Three months ago, state correction officers in Muskegon were leaving a local bowling alley, having completed their bowling league games when they were ambushed in the parking lot. There was gunfire directed at their persons.

#4 On January 13, 2012, State Correction Officer Clarence Hammond, having completed his shift at Macomb Correctional Facility, paid the ultimate price as he was on the way home: he was shot and killed. Officer Hammond did not have an exempt CPL and he was unable to defend his own life.

In today's world, parolees and their associates quite frankly have the advantage. With computer programs from White Pages to Google Earth, an inmate that is on parole or his gang members can easily plan out an attack.

State Correction Officers are given 54 hours of handgun training. This includes classroom instruction, hands-on practicals and range time. Classroom training covers law legalities, dynamic use of force, and transportation of prisoners. The practicals include simunition training, shoot/don't shoot situations, and handgun retention. The classroom and range training is more in depth than most local police officers receive.

The aforementioned are just four incidents among numerous attacks that state correction officers have and continue to endure. SCOs have more FACE TIME with convicted criminals than judges, prosecuting attorneys, police officers, parole/probation agents, and MDOC absconder officers combined, yet ONLY state correction officers are refused an exempt CPL.

In conclusion, I would beseech you to approve state correction officers to have an exempt CPL allowing them the right to protect themselves and their families in their community.

Thank you.

**Ronald Solmes**  
Corrections Officer